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PAKISTAN

by

Babu Rajendra Prasad

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Edited by Yusuf Meherally

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INTRODUCTION

Of late, various suggestions have been made, from time to time, by some leading Muslims for safeguarding and protecting what they regard to be special rights of Muslims. One of the earliest of such suggestions was the creation of separate electorates for Muslims. This has been tried for about thirty years now. Later on, to separate electorates was added weightage in representation for them in legislatures. The Congress-League Pact of 1916 conceded this. It was a pact between the two organizations at a time when all the provinces were not equally organized or vocal, and some of the provinces of to-day had not come into existence either in the scheme of the British Government, or even in the constitution of the Congress on the basis of linguistic division. The Muslims were allowed weightage in some provinces much in excess of their population, while in the two important provinces of the Punjab and Bengal they got less than what their numbers entitled them to. The weightage everywhere was at the expense of the majority community.

Till then the Muslim League claimed what it did for the Muslims, and did not think of other minorities. As the Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal became more self-conscious and vocal, they resented the Lucknow Pact and wanted its

reversal so far as those two provinces were concerned. The theory of weightage for minorities in those provinces at the expense of the majority community there was never raised. On the other hand, when that Pact was destroyed and replaced by the MacDonald Communal Decision, the advantage of separate electorates and weightage in the provinces where the Muslims are in a minority is allowed to remain as it was given under the Pact, but in the Punjab the Muslims are given a statutory majority. In Bengal they have been given representation in the legislature which is somewhat less than what their numbers entitle them to, but the Hindu minority has to suffer and supply the bulk of the weightage that is given to other minorities or interests, as (for example) the various European interests. The minority community of Hindus, instead of getting any weightage, is thus deprived even of its just representation according to its numbers, and is converted into a smaller minority by being compelled to give weightage to others even more than the Muslims are required to do. No wonder that the opposition to the decision is most genuine and most vehement in those provinces. My object at present, however, is not to criticize the Communal Decision. I am trying to bring out the inconsistency in the position, and to show how what has been considered sufficient protection and safeguard at one time has been discarded for something which is considered better at a later time.

Many experienced and far-seeing Muslim leaders opposed the idea of separate electorates and weightage, and said that they were no safeguards at all, and would only result in increasing bitterness without giving any real protection to Muslims. It was pointed out that separate electorates would enable candidates to look to their own respective communities only, without regard to other communities, and thus in their rivalry with other candidates of their own community each would try to surpass others in his communal demands. And the mischief would not rest there. The non-Muslim candidates would similarly begin to imitate the Muslim candidates and vie with one another in their desire to safeguard the so-called interests of non-Muslims, as against the Muslims. A real tug-of-war would then arise. Further, the Muslims, even with their weightage, would find it difficult, if not impossible, to overbear the other communities or even the Hindus, if the latter became organized on a communal basis. It was pointed out by those leaders that Muslims, in their own interest, would do well not to insist too much on these makeshifts which would ultimately prove wholly unreliable and that they should rather seek other avenues for safeguarding such of their interests as differed from those of the rest of Indians.

In spite of the opposition of the Hindus and the warnings of far-seeing Muslim leaders, separate electorates and weightage were insisted upon and Congress and the British Government

conceded them to Muslims. Separate electorates and weightage in representation for Muslims came to be looked upon as something sacred, which could not and should not be touched. To-day, when Muslims have been enjoying them for years, it is said that they have been oppressed and all kinds of tyranny have been perpetrated on them, or, in other words, that the safeguards had not been of any use to them in protecting them. The reliance on the Governors for the protection of Muslims has proved equally undependable. I do not for a moment admit that all these oppressions and tyrannies have been actually committed, or that the Governors have failed in their duty towards Muslims. But assuming that they are correct, as the Muslim League insists that they are, the inference follows that the view of that section of Muslims who opposed separate electorates and weightage in the interests of Muslims themselves has turned out to be only too true. Whether Muslims have been oppressed or not, one thing is clear: they do not consider them now as sufficient safeguards for their protection, and what has long been so pathetically stuck to has proved to be a broken reed, as was predicted. It is equally clear that separate electorates have caused and aroused more communal feeling than anything else, and that it is not confined to communities which have enjoyed these separate electorates but has also permeated other communities who have fallen a prey to it, not only as against Muslims but also

among different sub-communities or caste interests. This is a great legacy from our recent past.

The Muslim League is dissatisfied with the present arrangement, but has not definitely put forward anything else, either instead of separate electorates and weightage, or, in addition to them, which it considers necessary for safeguarding Muslim interests. Several suggestions are in the air, though not authoritatively put forward by the Muslim League. There are several schemes of dividing India, which, it is suggested, will give protection to Muslims. All these schemes suffer from some very serious defects.

The Muslim population is concentrated in two parts of India, and rather sparsely spread in other parts. The north-western corner is largely populated by Muslims, and similarly Eastern Bengal has an overwhelming Muslim population. But even in these areas the population of non-Muslims is not negligible. By separating these areas and treating them as Muslim areas, the difficulty about minorities will not be solved, because this solution gives no protection to the Muslims in other parts of India. The Hindus and Sikhs in the north-west, and the Hindus and some other small communities in Eastern Bengal will constitute the minorities in those Muslim areas, and the question of protecting the minority community will remain as acute as ever, only the minorities in these areas will not be Muslims, but for that reason no whit less deserving of

protection, if the theory of protection is based on the assumption that a majority community is sure, or at least likely, to oppress the minority.

An exchange of population so as to make the Muslim area as Muslim as possible and the non-Muslim area as free from Muslims as possible is suggested as a remedy. Even assuming that this exchange of population is feasible, which I consider to be wholly impracticable in India with all its traditions shared by Hindus and Muslims alike, what about the Muslims in the rest of India? How are they to be protected? They cannot simply be all transferred from other provinces, and concentrated in these two areas, or in any other area. Apart from the traditional attachment to land which all Indians have, the cost and inconvenience of such large-scale exchanges of population is simply unthinkable; and so far as I know, only one of the several schemes, which have dealt with this matter, has suggested such wholesale evacuation and transfer of population to other areas on such a gigantic scale. If this scheme of homogeneous Muslim and non-Muslim areas is impracticable, how is the minority problem solved by creating, say, two or more exclusively Muslim areas? A very large body of Muslims, comprising many millions, will continue to remain in areas which are predominantly and overwhelmingly non-Muslim. What protection can they have against these overwhelming majorities, assuming again that majorities are sure to oppress the minorities? It may be suggested that the non-

Muslim minorities in the Muslim areas will be hostages in the hands of Muslim majorities there, just as the Muslim minorities in the overwhelmingly non-Muslim areas will be in the hands of non-Muslims, and that it will thus be possible to compel the Muslims and non-Muslims to behave towards each other—lest their respective minorities should be oppressed in the other areas.

This argument, too, is fallacious. Even today the provinces on the north-west, like the Punjab. N.-W.F.P. and Sind, and Bengal have Muslim majorities, while the other provinces have non-Muslim majorities, and yet, if the story of oppression that is being broadcast by the Muslim League is even partially true, what protection have the minorities received on account of their co-religionists being in a majority in other provinces? It is, therefore, submitted that the whole theory of protection has an absolutely wrong psychological basis. The only protection that can be depended upon, and that will really work and is worth having, is the protection afforded by goodwill among communities, and those nobler instincts of man of which no community as such is devoid, and also those teachings which have been given by all religions, and have become part and parcel of mankind, even if it was without them in what is regarded as the barbaric age.

CHAPTER I.

SCHEMES FOR DIVIDING INDIA

After this general discussion of the problem, I should like to deal in some detail with the various schemes of partition or division of India which have been suggested. I have seen five such schemes. Three of them, *viz.*, (a) the Pakistan scheme, which may be said to be amplified and merged in, (b) the Indusstan scheme, and (c) the scheme by two Professors of the Aligarh University, which insists upon the creation of separate Muslim and Hindu States which will be free and independent of each other and joined with several zones for purposes of the Federation under the Government of India Act of 1935.

Of all these schemes, the Indusstan scheme has been worked out in greatest detail in a book named the *Confederacy of India* by "Punjabi." A pamphlet by the two Aligarh Professors gives their scheme in skeleton, but is quite clear and intelligible. It differs from the Indusstan scheme in some respects—but both are based on the same assumptions, and are intended to serve the same purpose. The underlying assumption in both these schemes is that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations, having not only different religions, but also differing cultures and conflicting political and economic interests.

It is asserted over and over again in the *Confederacy of India* by "Punjabi" that it is wrong, historically and in fact, to regard Hindus and Muslims as one nation, and that their differences and conflicts are so deep and extensive that they can never coalesce into a nation. On page 56 it starts with the following assertion: "The basic principle of attempts at building a national India rests on a wrong assumption, namely that India constitutes one country and Indians form a single nation." Thus describing the difference between the two, it says on pages 88-89: "Much stress is laid by the nationalists when preaching Hindu-Muslim unity on the necessity of separating religion from politics. Hindus may be able to accept this advice, for already their religious belief is isolated from their social system. The Muslims cannot divorce their religion from their politics. In Islam, religious and political beliefs are not separated from each other. It speaks of this world as well as of the world to come. Religion and politics are inseparably associated in the minds and thoughts of all Muslims. They cannot be first Indians and then Muslims or *vice versa*. Their religion includes their politics, and their politics are a part of their religion. The mosque not only constitutes the place of worship but also the Assembly Hall. It is open to the Muslims to offer their daily prayers individually, but it is preferable if they offer them in congregation. In addition to their daily prayers they are also enjoined to say the weekly Jumma prayers and the

Id prayers in the mosques in the company of fellow Muslims. The mosque forms the centre of all aspects of their public life, religious, social, economic and political. Consequently, they are not in a position to separate religion from politics, or to prefer one to the other. They are born into a system. The system is not thrust upon them. Religion and politics are the same to them. Hence Hindu-Muslim unity or nationalism, signifying homogeneity between them in all non-religious matters, is unimaginable. The Islamic polity, in which religion and politics are inseparably united, requires perfect isolation for its development. The idea of a common State with heterogeneous membership is alien to Islam, and can never be fruitful."

After discussion at a great length how the interests of the two communities (which he says are wrongly called "sister communities") (p. 33), differ from each other, he comes to the conclusion which will be regarded by all nationalists as highly disappointing, historically wrong and utterly devoid of any hope for the future of this country. He writes in pp. 150-151: "From our previous discussions we find that the Hindus and Muslims are two absolutely different entities. Their civilizations are pronouncedly individualistic, and although they may have influenced each other, yet they cannot suffer absorption into each other. Their habits and customs, social system, moral codes, religious, political and cultural ideas, traditions, languages, literature, architecture, art

and outlook on life are absolutely different from, nay, hostile to, one another. These heterogenous essentials of their respective lives are not elements which go to the formation of a single nation. They always create mutual distrust and misunderstanding. The basic difference between the communities, the memories of their past and present rivalries, and the wrongs they registered against each other during the last one thousand years form an unbridgeable gulf between them. As we have already observed, the only thing common between them for the last few centuries has been the common yoke of a foreign rule. As soon as the cord which binds them in a common allegiance to a foreign State snaps, they will disintegrate and their mutual differences, which are not felt at present as acutely as they should, will show themselves more glaringly."

The two Professors of Aligarh, in their short pamphlet, are not less emphatic than is "Punjabi." Criticising the Government of India Act of 1935, they say: "Its fundamental fault is that it does not recognize the undeniable fact that the Muslims of India are a nation distinct from Hindus, vitally opposed to the latter in their outlook and aspirations, and incapable of being merged into any other so-called nation, Hindu or non-Hindu." Again: "We are convinced that we, the Muslims of India, must insist persistently and strenuously on—among other things—that the Muslims of India are a nation by themselves. They have a distinct national entity wholly different

from the Hindus and other non-Muslim groups. Indeed, they are more different from the Hindus than the Sudeten Germans were from the Czechs."

Founded upon these assumptions, the objective of the partition, or division, of India is described in equally clear, emphatic and unambiguous terms. The objective is the establishment of Islamic States in the so-called Islamic areas, which are sought to be separated. Thus the *Confederacy of India* says in pp. 98-99: "Independence does not signify the same thing to the Congress as it does to the Muslims. To the Congress 'independence' constitutes a national necessity, and they want it for the restoration of national self-respect and all the other national, social and economic benefits which accrue from it. To Muslims independence is a religious necessity, for the achievement of the spiritual and worldly benefits which Islam promises. Muslims want independence for the sake of their religious and cultural ideals, for they cannot flourish under a foreign rule. Under an alien State, or even in a State formed in alliance with a non-Muslim community, the individual's Islamic personality, upon which depends the attainment of heaven, cannot develop because of lack of the chances of self-expression. Only a State in which Muslims are given an opportunity of self-expression can suit their religious requirements, which include both the secular and spiritual sides of their lives. Only an Islamic State can be such. In States which

are not Islamic, they can at the most get opportunities for entitling themselves for purgatory."

The author disclaims any extraterritorial ideals, and asserts the objectives of the Industan movement in the following words (p. 17): "We should also make it clear to those Muslim separationists who want separation in order to link their destinies with States outside the Indian sub-continent that in demanding separation we should not be inspired by any such extra-territorial ideals, ambitions, or affinity. We should be separationists-cum-confederationists, and, if the Hindus disagree with the idea of a confederacy of a Hindu India and a Muslim India, then we should be simply separationists, demanding secession of our regions from Hindu India without any link between them. We should desire separation simply because we want to evolve a happier and more contended India, whether it be by separation of the Hindu cultural zones and Muslim cultural zones to be linked together in a confederacy, quite independent of, and separate from, each other except for the confederal bond, or complete separation in order to constitute our regions into a group of federated states independently and separately from Hindu India. The foreign element amongst us is quite negligible, and we are as much sons of the soil as the Hindus are. Ultimately, our destiny lies within India and not out of it. And it is for this reason that we have abstained from using the word 'Pakistan' and have instead used

the word 'Indusstan' to denote the North-West Muslim Block."

But that this is not going to remain the final objective is apparent from the following in the last pages of the book (pp. 269-79): "It is necessary to make it clear that the separation of our regions from Hindu India is not an end in itself, but only a means for the achievement of an ideal Islamic State. The proposed separation will undoubtedly lead to our emancipation from the economic slavery of the Hindus. But as our object is the establishment of an ideal Islamic State, it also denotes complete independence. After independence has been achieved, it would be impossible for us to maintain, for long in an un-Islamic world, our ideal of an Islamic State. As such, we shall have to advocate a world revolution on Islamic lines. Consequently, our ultimate ideal is a world revolution on purely Islamic lines. Separation, emancipation from the economic slavery of the Hindus, and freedom from the constitutional slavery of the British are only some of the means for the achievement of our ultimate ideal of a world revolution on completely Islamic lines."

The Aligarh scheme has similar aims, and says: "Political partition is the only solution of their problem. It is our bounden duty to fight for it to a man." Each of the three independent States of Pakistan, Hindustan and Bengal will have separate treaties of alliance with Great Britain and separate Crown representatives, if any."

Dr. S. A. Latif comes to the same conclusion regarding the differences between the two communities. Thus in page 10: "Ethnologically India is not homogeneous; it is a congeries of races and cross-breeds. But that alone would be no hindrance to the formation of a single nation, were the people at least culturally unified. That feature is also absent. Two great cultures, not to speak of others, subsist here side by side, inspired by two separate religions, affecting almost every detail of life. The two religions—Islamic and Hinduism— have evolved two entirely different social orders." And in page 11: "To add to these difficulties, the field of operation for the idea of a single nationality is too vast. India is not a country; it is a continent as wide as Europe minus Russia. Even the unity, political or economic, that exists at present is, after all, the result of British rule, which so many are out to destroy." And in page 23: "The Hindu-Muslim problem is really cultural—using the term in its wider sense—rather than a purely political problem, and affects the future of two great communities, neither of whom would like to merge into the other, but both might be willing to live together on the best of terms possible.

"The idea of a composite nation in a country of heterogeneous castes, creeds, cultures should, therefore, be banished altogether. It will not thrive on the Indian soil. Suspicions, deep and abiding, exist between the two nationalities. That nobody dare deny. If

India is freed from the British domination, the Hindus fear that there might again be an extension of the Muslim political influence from the North-West, on which side there is a block of Muslim countries extending right up to the Atlantic, a block which is gradually acquiring a pan-Muslim consciousness that might one day set in motion new forces calling for a readjustment or redistribution of power between the different parts of the world. Consequently, the Hindu nationality in India, in spite of every profession to the contrary, seems to have set its heart on *Purna Swaraj* or independence, that could be expressed substantially in terms of the Statute of Westminster, as that would give them the controlling voice in the internal administration of the country and at the same time the indispensable British protection from any invasion of the country from the North-West. On the other hand, the Muslims could not but feel that the acquisition of such power by the Hindu nationality would place the Muslims for ever under its subjection, and allow them little chance for an independent existence on their own cultural lines. The suspicion on either side is a genuine suspicion, and will need to be permanently allayed if India should achieve lasting peace and happiness." Dr. Latif's objective is to establish separate cultural zones under Hindu and Muslim Governments and all joined in a Federation of India.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONFEDERACY SCHEME

I shall now describe the various schemes.

The scheme propounded in the *Confederacy of India* by "Punjabi" may be described as follows:—

According to this scheme, the present subcontinent of India can be split up into various countries on the following lines and re-assembled in a confederacy of India: (1) The Indus Regions' Federation, with the Punjab (minus its Eastern Hindu tracts comprising the Ambala division, Kangra district and Una and Garhshankar tahsils of the Hoshiarpur district,) Sind, the N.W.F.P., Kashmir, Baluchistan, Bhawalpur, Amb, Dir Swat, Chitral, Khanpur, Kalat, Las Bela, Kapurthala, and Malerkotla as its federal units. The author has calculated that this Federation of the Indus Regions, which he proposes to name as "Indusstan," will comprise an area of 3,98,838 square miles, with a population of about 3,30,00,000, of whom about 82 per cent. will be Muslims, about 6 per cent, Sikhs and about 8 per cent. Hindus.

(2) The Hindu India Federation with the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bihar with some portions of Bengal, Orissa, Assam, Madras, Bombay and the Indian States other than the Rajistan and Deccan States included in the

States' Federation as its federal units. He had not worked out the area and population of these units, but they will be as follows:—

Area—7,42,173 square miles.
Population—21,60,41,541.
Percentage of Hindus—83.72.
Percentage of Muslims—11.

(3) The Rajistan Federation with the various States of Rajputana and Central India as its federal units. Their area and population will be as follows:—

Area—1,80,656 square miles.

Population—1,78,58,502.

Percentage of Hindus—86.39.

Percentage of Muslims—8.09.

(4) The Deccan States' Federation comprising the Hyderabad, Mysore and Bastur States. Their area and population is as follows:—

Area—1,25,086 square miles.
Population—2,15,18,171.
Percentage of Hindus—85.28.
Percentage of Muslims—8.99.

(5) The Bengal Federation.—The prominent Muslim tracts of Eastern Bengal and Goalpara and Sylhet districts of Assam, as its provincial units, and Tripura and other States lying within the provincial unit or cut off by its territories from Hindu India as its State units. The area comprised in this Federation, according to the

author's calculation, is 59,764 square miles, and the population is about 3,10,00,000, of whom 2,05,00,000 or 66.1 per cent. will be Muslims and 1,01,00,000 or 33.9 per cent. will be Hindus. The author admits that not being familiar with the conditions prevailing in this area his suggestion is subject to adjustments, which local Muslims may consider necessary. His figures, too, appear to be not quite accurate, although they roughly represent the percentage. The Districts of Bengal which he includes in this Federation are Dinajpur, Malda, Bogra, Rajshahi, Murshidabad, Pabna, Mymensingh, Nadia, Jessore, Faridpur, Dacca, Tippera, Noakhali, Bakerganj, Khulna and Chittagong.

"In a confederation of India on the lines chalked out above, each federation joining it can have a governor-general with the governor of its provincial units under him responsible to the Central Confederal authority, in relation to the confederal subjects, and matters relating to the rights and obligations of the Crown in respect of the Indian States within the federation. The confederal authority can be vested in the Viceroy assisted by a confederal assembly consisting of members drawn from the various Indian Federations. The number of such members to be drawn from a federation can be fixed according to its importance judged from the point of view of its significance to the confederacy as regards its geographical situation in the sub-continent, population, area and economic position, etc. Foreign re-

lations, defence, and matters relating to water supply from the common natural sources and rights and obligations of the Crown in relation to the Indian States (which may join any of the British Provinces' Federation) can be entrusted to their Governor-General, who will be responsible to the Viceroy. The various Federations joining the Confederacy can either directly contribute towards the revenue of the Confederacy or assign some portions of their revenues from some specific heads towards its expenses." "Under no circumstances should the Muslim North-West consent to assign customs as a source of the confederal revenues." (P. 12.)

The author adds: "This idea of a binational, trilingual and quinquepartite confederation may be novel, and unprecedented in history, but it is not impracticable. A reduced Hindu minority and the Kashmir State with a Muslim population and a Hindu Raja in the federated North-West will form a guarantee for the security of the Muslim minority and Hyderabad State with Hindu population and a Muslim Nizam in Hindu India, and *vice versa.* It does not mean breaking up the geographical unity of the Indian sub-continent by tearing it up into pieces and assigning them to the communities on a population and cultural basis. It simply means internal partition effected between the various members of a joint family without breaking their mutual bond of relationship. Consequently, separation means assigning different parts of the sub-continent to

different communities on a cultural basis and their reunion in a confederacy." (Pp. 15-16.)

The author does not like exchange of population, and says: "We would prefer separation of the predominantly Muslim regions from Hindu India without any exchange of population. The Indus regions (minus the Ambala division and other Hindu tracts of the Punjab in the North-West), and Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi divisions of Bengal with the districts of Goalpara and Sylhet of Assam in the East can be easily separated from India and constituted into two separate States. In this sense, separation will help 2,57,14,657 Muslims of the Indus regions and about 2,30,00,000 of Bengal and Assam to escape Hindu domination, while 2,89,63,343 Muslims will remain in Hindu provinces." (P. 204.)

The author admits that "the racial question does not exist between the Muslim North-West and Hindu India. But its place has been taken by the still serious question of religious and cultural differences." The Majority of the Muslims inhabiting these regions are converts from Hinduism and zealously desire to maintain their identity as a separate and independent community from the Hindus." (P. 237.) He supports his idea of separation as follows: "The partitioning of India between the communities will end the clash between the religious and political ideals which is at present witnessed among the Muslims as well as the Hindus. The state of hesitancy in which

we find the Muslims to-day, to which is due their stagnant condition, will end with the ending of the clash between their patriotic and religious sentiments. In a purely Muslim State the question of giving precedence to religion over politics or *vice versa* will never arise. Fidelity to religion and allegiance to territory will align themselves imperceptibly in a purely Muslim nation. This will also be true in the case of Hindu India." (Pp. 239-40.)

I have tried to put the case for separation of India as fairly as I can, and in the words of the authors themselves as far as possible. It is obviously open to objections which may be enumerated—

(1) It proceeds upon certain wrong assumption, *e.g.* that India is not a country but a subcontinent consisting of several countries which may enter into a confederacy and each unit in the confederacy will be a federation of several units within itself comprising British Provinces or areas and Indian States.

That the Hindus and Muslims are two different nations with nothing common between them except a common country and a common bondage under the British; and so far as the Indus region and Bengal are concerned, they do not have even a common country, as these are Muslim countries. That, historically, India has never been one.

(2) The separation of the North-West and the North-East will not solve the Hindu-Muslim problem.

(3) The units of the Confederacy are not selected on any logical or understandable basis.

(4) Communities other than Hindus and Muslims have not been taken into consideration at all—but it has been assumed that they will fall in line. This is so in spite of the fact that in considering the position of the Punjab the case of the Sikhs has been discussed.

(5) The ultimate objective means either disruption of India or its subjection to Muslim rule.

I shall take up each of these.

It is wrong to say that India is not one country. Physically, naturally and geographically, India is one country. It is marked out and separated from other countries by unmistakable and almost unsurpassable natural boundaries on all sides. It is a peninsula and so on three sides of it we have the sea. On the north we have the mighty Himalayas—on the north-west and the north-east there is a natural fortification provided by hills which ought to prove unsurmountable. It is true that within the country itself there is a variety of soil, climate and natural scenery. These are found to a larger or smaller extent in every country. And even within what are sought to be

treated as separate countries within the sub-continent of India, *viz.*, the North-West Indus region and the North-East Bengal and Assam region, there is considerable variety in soil, climate and natural scenery. And if with all this variety the North-West region, which in miniature presents all the varieties and variations that are to be found in India as a whole, can be treated as one country, there is no reason why the whole of India should not be similarly treated as one.

It is a historical fact that India between the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean and between the Hindukush and the Bay of Bengal and the hills on the North-Eastern Frontier has always been treated as one. There were, undoubtedly, kingdoms within the country more or less independent of each other. But the attempt of every great king has been to have his suzerainty over the whole of India. This has been the case since the mythical days of Ramchandra all through the periods of Chandra Gupta, Asoka, the Gupta Emperors, the Pathan Kings, the Mughal Emperors, right down to the present day of the British Empire. No one has treated any part of geographical India as constituting a separate country. Occasionally and for short periods, the boundary line on the North-West has varied according to the strength of the rulers; but at no time has it been accepted by any one—Hindu, Muslim or the British—that any part within the physical boundaries set by nature was a different country.

It is equally untrue that Hindus and Muslims constitute two different nations. It is admitted by the author that there is no racial difference between the two communities, the Muslims being mostly, converts from among the Hindus. They speak the same language within the province or area where they live. Thus in the Punjab the Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs all speak Punjabi; in the N.W.F. Province they speak Pushto; in Sind they speak Sindhi; in Bengal they speak Bengali; and that portion of Assam which is sought to be joined with Bengal is also largely Bengali-speaking, and so they speak Bengali. There is, therefore, no division between Hindus and Muslims on the basis of language. If the North-West region with so many different languages, *viz.*, Pushto, Kashmiri, Punjabi, Sindhi and Baluchi—not to speak of their dialects—can form one country, there is no reason why India as a whole cannot be treated as one country. Thus by blood and by language they are one.

They differ in religion; and the religious difference creates differences in social customs and personal laws. Admitting all that is said about treating them in the twentieth century as two nations, when they have never been so treated before, even during the days of the Muslim Kings and Emperors these differences were not intensified, but efforts were made to minimize them. There are many customs which Hindus have borrowed from Muslims, and many which Muslims have borrowed from Hindus, or it may be that they have retained them even after their

conversion from Hinduism to Islam. The extent to which common customs are shared differs from province to province, community to community, and, maybe, from family to family. One can understand that puritanic Muslims may dislike the customs which have been borrowed or retained by Muslims from Hindus, and they may try to introduce reforms which they may consider to be in conformity with what they consider to be the teachings of Islam. No one can object to that. But does that mean that they cease to be a part of India and Indians? It may not be forgotten that large conversions to Islam from amongst Hindus have been made not by the puritanical sort but by those who did not pay much attention to minor details of everyday life, but laid stress on the fundamental religious teachings of Islam. And even in Islam there have been schools which have differed from each other in many respects but have agreed in the fundamental teachings of the oneness of God and the prophethood of the great Prophet of Islam. Minor differences have not made them different nations. Are the customs prevalent in Afghanistan, for example, the same as those in Turkey, Persia or Egypt, not to speak of other distant countries? Are their modes of living the same? Is not a Punjabi Muslim or Sind Muslim or Frontier Muslim infinitely more different from his co-religionist of Turkey, Egypt or Persia than from a Punjabi Hindu, Sindhi or Frontier Hindu in dress, language, customs, mode of living except in the matter of his belief and mode of worship?

One may admit that Islam has a philosophy of life of its own. Yet it cannot be denied that it has permitted infinite variations in details of living in the various countries where it has spread. It could not be otherwise, if its fundamental teaching is accepted as true. That fundamental belief must shine through an infinite variety of outer living like a steady flame, whatever the colour of the glass chimney surrounding it, and existing facts no less than past history show this. Why then should Muslims of India cease to be Indians? Why should they not have attachment to the land of their birth without tearing it away from the rest to which it has been inextricably attached by God who made the Indian "sub-continent" one whole in His Infinite Wisdom?

The Muslims have every right to insist that they shall not be interfered with in the observance of their religious rites and worship; that their culture and all that it implies in so far as they differ from others shall be allowed freedom to develop and grow in their own way; that even in the administration of the country they shall have their due share—and all these should be guaranteed and respected. Any arrangements that may be considered necessary and feasible to assure all this should be made. But this does not mean and ought not to mean that they cease to be Indians, that the portion they inhabit should cease to be parts of India and become independent and separate countries bound together by a very thin tie of confederation which will also be ultimately snapped.

The solution provided by separation of Hindu India from Muslim India is really no solution at all of the Hindu-Muslim problem. Whatever may happen to the Hindus or Muslims of the North-West and the North-East as a result of this separation, there is no solution for the problem in the rest of the country which is by far the larger part of the country and which will continue to trouble nearly one-third of the Muslims of the country. If all that is said about Hindu oppression of the Muslims in the country is true even in part, the separation will continue that oppression, if not intensify it. In the United Provinces and Bihar, the Muslim minorities provide a highly cultured class in no way inferior in intellect, education, culture and even wealth to the Hindus—only they are less in numbers than the Hindus. Are they to be left at the mercy of the Hindus? Is it not a fact that these provinces also supply a very large proportion of the Muslim intelligentsia of the country? What is going to happen to them? This proposal of separation of the North-West and the North-East may possibly help to some extent the local Muslims, although it is very doubtful if in this age, isolation from the rest of the country will be at all profitable to them—an isolation which is bound to result if they are to be treated, as proposed, "as independent countries with separate treaties with England and having independent relation with foreign countries, especially Muslim countries." (P. 260) The Muslims who will be left behind in Hindu India will be numerous enough and the Hindu-Muslim problem

will continue to trouble politicians and laymen alike, and all the arrangements which are now in existence or which may be thought of in the future to safeguard their interests will have to remain in force. The author has disclaimed any intention of a complete separation—but there can be no other logical or reasonable conclusion to his proposal, and in the penultimate paragraphs of his book he makes it clear by implication that there can be no other end.

Looking at the scheme as it is propounded, there is no attempt at providing a logical basis for the various federations that are suggested within the Confederacy of India.

The North-West region is, undoubtedly, on extensive tract; but apart from this and common religion of a majority of the inhabitants there is nothing else that is common. There are at least five languages spoken within the area; and historically it can hardly be claimed that they have ever been one. Those who will constitute this federation, *e.g.*, the Sikhs and the Muslims, the Pathans and the Punjabis, the Baluchis and the Sindhis, have never had any stable common Government before the establishment of British rule in that tract, and some of them have more bitter memories of each other's dealings in the not very distant past than what perhaps exists in any other part of the country. If the Sikhs and the Muslims of the North-West region can forget their bitter experience of each other in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, is it unreasonable to suppose

that Hindus have forgotten theirs, which are centuries older? This federation will not be at all homogeneous, and with a strong minority of Hindus and Sikhs who will constitute not less than 14 per cent. even after excluding the eastern districts of the Punjab, where the Hindus predominate, there will be constant bickering and trouble, unless one party suppresses the other completely, assuming that different communities can never live together in peace, which is the assumption on which the whole scheme is based.

If the North-West region is considered to be so doubtful a proposition for attaining the object the author has in view, the Hindu Federation is a greater absurdity. It comprises no less than six regions separated each from others by other federations intervening. It spreads from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from the north-eastern corner of India bordering on China and Burma to the Arabian Sea. Several corridors have to be provided to connect one portion with another. Several tracts are torn from their natural surroundings and tacked on to others from which they are separated by long distances. Within this vast area all the languages that are spoken in the whole of India except Sindhi, Baluchi and Pushto will be found to be spoken, as it comprises bits of every linguistic division. Similarly, the inhabitants of this area will be found to follow each and every religion of the country, only their numbers and proportions will be different. It will contain portions of British India and Indian

States. There appears to be no basis or logic in which this separate federation is created. If this can form one federation with more than two crores of Muslims within it, there is no reason why the whole of India cannot form one federation.

If the Rajputana and Central India Agency States form one federation, there is no reason why Bastur which naturally by language belongs to the Chhatisgarh or Orissa States should be torn from them and attached to Hyderabad Federation. Similarly, there is no reason why Travancore and Cochin, which are more or less contiguous to Mysore, should be attached to the Hindu Federation and torn away from the Deccan States Federation. Within the Hyderabad State three languages are spoken by the inhabitants, *viz.*, Marathi, Telugu and Kanarese—apart from Hindustani, or Urdu, which is the language of the Ruler. The addition of Mysore and Cochin and Travancore will add only one more language to the Federation, *viz.*, Malayalam which is spoken in Cochin and Travancore, the language of Mysore being Kanarese.

Judged from any point of view—whether of racial characteristics, language, historical associations and even religion and culture based thereon—there seems to be no logical basis for the various federations which have been suggested by "Punjabi" in his *Confederacy of India*. This division will not solve the Hindu-Muslim problem for the very large numbers of Hindus and Sikhs in the

Muslim regions of the North-West and North-East, and for the equally large number of Muslims in the rest of India. It altogether ignores all communities other than Hindus and Muslims, and so the Sikhs and Christians (who have a considerable population) are not likely to agree to be ignored. It ultimately aims at the disruption of the country, and an Islamic revolution which means establishment of Islamic rule over the whole country under the Muslims of the Punjab and Bengal. This is not likely to be accepted by the country as a whole, and it is doubtful if even the Muslims in other provinces will submit to this. Past history shows that even Muslims have never willingly accepted the rule of any one single King or Emperor, and it is higly improbable that the Muslims in other parts of India will willingly submit to be ruled by Muslims of the North-West, even if they can all agree amongst themselves in that region. Other communities will certainly resent the rule of one community, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other. There is no hope for the country in that way. The only hope is in finding a solution based on understanding, on conciliation, on toleration, on give and take, aye, on love.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALIGARH SCHEME

Let me now consider the scheme proposed by Professors Syed Zafrul Hasan and Mohammad Afzul Hussain Qadri of Aligarh. The principles on which it is based are stated by the authors as follows:—

1. That the Muslims of India are a nation by themselves. They have a distinct national unity wholly different from the Hindus and other non-Muslim groups. Indeed they are more different from the Hindus than the Sudeten Germans were from the Czechs;

2. That the Muslims of India have a separate national future, and their own contributions to make to the betterment of the world;

3. That the future of the Muslims of India lies in complete freedom from the domination of the Hindus, the British, or for the matter of that, any other people;

4. That the Muslim majority provinces cannot be permitted to be enslaved into a single All-India Federation, with an overwhelming Hindu Majority at the Centre; and

5. That the Muslims in the minority provinces shall not be allowed to be deprived of their separate religious, cultural and political identity,

and that they shall be given full and effective support by the Muslim majority provinces.

The scheme is to divide India into several wholly independent and sovereign States as follows:—

1. Pakistan comprising the Punjab, N.W.F.P., Sind, Baluchistan and the States of Kashmir and Jammu, Mandi, Chamba, Sakit, Sumin, Kapurthala, Malerkotla, Chitral, Dir, Kalat, Loharu, Bilaspur, Simla Hill States, Bahawalpur, etc.

Population—3,92,74,244.

Muslims—2,36,97,538; 60.3 per cent.

2. Bengal (excluding Howrah and Midnapore districts), Purnea district (Bihar), Sylhet division (Assam).

Population—5,25,79,232.

Muslims—3,01,18,184; 57.0 per cent.

3. Hindustan comprising the rest of India and Indian States (excluding Hyderabad, Pakistan, Bengal and the States included therein).

Population—21,60,00,000.

Muslims—2,09,60,000; 9.7 per cent.

4. Hyderabad comprising Hyderabad, Berar and Karnatak (Madras and Orissa).

Population—2,90,65,098.

Muslims—21,44,010; 7.4 per cent.

(a) Delhi Province including Delhi, Meerut division, Rohilkhand division and the district of Aligarh (Agra division).

Population—1,26,60,000.

Muslims—35,20,000; 28.0 per cent.

(b) Malabar Province consisting of Malabar and adjoining areas, *i.e.,* Malabar and South Kanara.

Population—49,00,000.

Muslims—14,40,000; 27.0 per cent.

Further all the towns of India with a population of 50,000 or more shall have the status of a Borough or Free City with a large measure of autonomy. These will have a Muslim population of 13,88,698. The Muslims in the rural areas of Hindustan must be persuaded not to remain scattered in negligible minorities as they do at present but to aggregate in villages with a preponderant Muslim population.

The aforesaid three States of Pakistan, Bengal and Hindustan should enter into a defensive and offensive alliance on the following basis:—

1. Mutual recognition and reciprocity.

2. That Pakistan and Bengal be recognized as the homeland of Muslims and Hindustan as the homeland of Hindus, to which they can migrate respectively, if and when they want to do.

3. In Hindustan the Muslims are to be recognized as a nation in minority and part of a larger nation inhabiting Pakistan and Bengal.

4. The Muslim minority in Hindustan and the non-Muslim minority in Pakistan and Bengal will have (i) representation according to population and (ii) separate electorates and representation at every stage, together with effective safeguards guaranteed by all the three States. Seperate representation according to population may be granted to all considerable minorities in the three States, *e.g.*, Sikhs, non-caste Hindus, etc.

5. An accredited Muslim political organization will be the sole official representative body of the Muslims in Hindustan.

Each of the three independent States of Pakistan, Hindustan and Bengal will have separate treaties of alliance with Great Britain and separate Crown representatives, if any. They will have a joint court of arbitration to settle any dispute that may arise between themselves or between them and the Crown.

Hyderabad commands a position which is exclusively its own. It is recognized as an ally by the British Government. In truth, it is a sovereign State by treaties. Berar and Karnatak were taken from it by the British for administrative reasons, and so they must be restored. Hyderabad with its restored territories should be recognized expressly as a sovereign State, at least

as sovereign as Nepal. With Karnatak restored, it will have a sea coast and will naturally become the southern wing of Muslim India. It is not clear why it should be treated as a Muslim country when the population is so overwhelmingly non-Muslim, the Muslims being only 7.4 per cent.

This scheme is, in substance, a scheme for the Confederacy of India. It differs from the scheme of "Punjabi" in certain matters of detail regarding the areas comprised in the separate Hindu and Muslim States, and in one most important matter, in that, unlike the other scheme, which treats Hyderabad on the same footing as other Indian States, it claims for it a sovereign status. It is, therefore, open to most of the objections to which "Punjabi's" scheme is open, and in many respects in an aggravated form. Thus within Pakistan it leaves a very much larger non-Muslim minority, and it includes in Bengal Purnea, from Bihar, and some of the districts of Burdwan division and the Presidency division, from Bengal, which have considerable majority of non-Muslims within them. It is further objectionable on the ground that it seeks to intensify the division by creating so many separate and independent "free cities" all over India. Since the authors have compared Hindus and Muslims to Czechs and Sudeten Germans, one may compare these free cities to Danzig, and one can only hope that it is not intended that history should repeat itself and India see a war for the conquest of the Czechs and of Hindustan on the pretext of Indian Czechs', the Hindus' ill-treatment

of the Indian Sudetens, and to free the so-called "free cities"—the Danzigs—of India. The authors contemplate mutual recognition and reciprocity as between Hindu and Muslim States, but when defining the bases of defensive and offensive alliance between them, they claim that in Hindustan the Muslims are to be recognized as a nation in minority and part of a larger nation (inhabiting Pakistan and Bengal), and they made no mention of a similar right to Hindus living in Pakistan and Bengal to be recognized as a nation inhabiting Hindustan! Again they claim that an accredited Muslim political organization will be the sole official representative body of the Muslims in Hindustan, but do not give to the Hindus and other minorities in Pakistan and Bengal the right to have accredited political organizations of their own to be their sole official representative bodies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LATIF SCHEME

The scheme of Dr. A. Latif, as elaborated in his *Muslim Problems in India,* unlike the schemes of "Punjabi" and the Aligarh Professors, is not a "separatist move involving endless complications," but claims to be a scheme for the unification of India on natural lines and is, therefore, entirely Indian in outlook (p. 28) and seeks to have a federation of culturally homogeneous States for India and form a nation of at least the type of Canada where two different races work together for a common country, while living in separate zones of their own (p. 29)—a scheme for unity and not for disruption (p. 38).

According to this scheme, "India may be divided into four cultural zones for the Muslims where homogeneity may be introduced, and at least eleven for the Hindus. The Indian States interspersed all over the country may be distributed between the different zones in accordance with their natural affinities. Each such zone will form a homogeneous State with a highly decentralized form of Government withinwhere more than a unit should compose the zone, but fitting along with similar States into an all-India federation." (P. 30.)

1. North-West Block consisting of Sind, Baluchistan, the Punjab, N.W.F. Province and Indian

States of Khairpur and Bhawalpur converted into a single autonomous State on the basis of federal relationship between the six units.

2. North-East Block comprising Eastern Bengal and Assam.

3. Delhi-Lucknow Block extending in a line from the eastern border of Patiala to Lucknow and rounding up Rampur including Agra, Delhi, Cawnpore and Lucknow.

4. The Deccan Block comprising Hyderabad, Berar and a strip of territory restored in the South running through the districts of Kurnool, Cuddapah, Chittoor and North Arcot and Chingleput down to the city of Madras providing an opening to the sea.

1. Portions of Bengal extended into a part of Bihar which had affinity with Bengal.

2. Orissa comprising all Oriya-speaking people.

3. Bihar and U.P. up to the line of Lucknow-Delhi Block extending from Himalayas to Vindhyas and including some of the Central India States. This will be Hindustan proper.

4. Rajput States of Rajputana.

5. Gujrat with Kathiawar.

6. Mahratha.

7. Canara.

8. Tamil.

10. Malabar.

11. A Hindu-Sikh Block including a portion of Kashmir in the North-West.

The scheme contemplates that the Hindus and Muslims living in Muslim and Hindu zones respectively should be transferred to the nearest Hindu or Muslim zone and thus a comparatively homogeneous zone should be created. Harijans should be left to choose the Hindu or Muslim zones and form their permanent homelands. The transference and exchange of population should be carried out gradually in the course of some years.

The constitution should have the following provisions:—

Public law of Indian nations:—(1) Individuals belonging to one or other of the several nationalities may for special purpose live in zones to which they do not culturally belong. They should be afforded security of person and rights of citizenship.

Religious shrines, etc.:—(2) Religious shrines, monuments, graveyards, should be preserved and looked after by each federal State under the supervision of the Central Government.

Christians, Buddhists, Parsis, etc.:—(3) The smaller nationalities will be afforded by each State all the necessary religious and cultural safeguards which might be needed to preserve their

individuality. They will have the right at the same time to ask for cantonal life, if they so desire at any time.

Harijans:—(4) They should be given perfect liberty to choose the Hindu or Muslim zones to form their permanent homelands where they will enjoy the fullest right of citizenship.

The author has prepared a constitution which may replace the Act of 1935. Firstly, it gives to every provincial federal unit as full an autonomy as is possible and safeguards the rights of the Indian States and their rulers by reducing the federal list of subjects to a bare minimum.

It provides for zonal or regional Boards for contiguous federal units possessing common affinities to evoke common policies in respect of subjects of cultural and economic importance common to them, leaving the individual units to legislate in the light of the policies so evolved.

Secondly, it gives to every provincial unit and the Centre a composite stable executive with an agreed policy instead of a parliamentary executive in the English sense.

Thirdly, it provides a machinery whereby cultural and economic security may be afforded to the Muslim and other minorities.

The scheme is for a federation of India composed of units with as much autonomy as possible except in matters which are absolutely common

to all, such as defence, foreign affairs, commerce, communications and the like, and residuary powers should vest in the units.

Because several cultures subsist in India and each should have freedom to develop and grow, a contingency in which legislation bearing on a cultural subject may be passed by the Centre should be avoided. Each culture should have the necessary sense of security so as to make it a willing and contented unit of the federation.

With full autonomy conceded to federal units and elimination in consequence of the concurrent list, the need of a co-ordinating agency will be felt in the zones; and the Zonal Boards are suggested to enable such groups to evolve common policies on common problems, leaving the individual federal units, whether Indian States or provinces, to legislate in the light of the common policies so evolved. The formation of such Boards will dispense with the need of resolving such groups into sub-federations, which will simply multiply administrative and legislative paraphernalia.

To safeguard against possible tyranny of a communal majority, the proposal provides for a stable, though composite, Executive, comprising members belonging to, and drawn from, all parties and groups. Its policy would not be other than the result of a compromise or of an attempt to reconcile different points of view. The general lines of such a policy would have to be laid down

by mutual agreement of a conference of representatives of political organizations of the different communities, and that on an all-India basis.

The executive will not constitute a "Coalition" Government, which is always unstable, but a composite stable Government such as exists in America. It is suggested, as a basis for discussion, that the Prime Minister in each province should be elected by the entire legislature to function during the lifetime of the legislature itself. He should be free to select his own colleagues on the executive in terms of the ratio to be fixed on an all-India basis, by agreement between the communities concerned. The executive so selected by the elected Premier will not be removable by an adverse vote of the legislature.

The following safeguards for Muslims should be incorporated in the constitutions:—

A. Representation in Legislature:—(1) Separate electorates as well as existing proportion of Muslims in several provinces should be maintained.

(2) The Indian States should return to the Central Legislature a sufficient quota of Muslims—at least one-third of the seats at the Centre.

(3) Muslims should be allowed adequate and effective representations on the Zonal or Regional Boards commensurate with their total strength in the legislature of the units composing the zone.

B. Legislation:—All subjects touching their religion, personal law and culture will be the concern of the Muslim members of the legislature concerned, constituted into a special committee for the purpose and strengthened by the co-option of, not more than a third of their number, representative Muslims learned in Muslim law and religion. The decision of this committee should be accepted by the legislature. Should such decisions affect the interests of other communities, they might be reviewed by the legislature as a whole, but no amendments affecting their basis should be permissible.

C. Executive:—The executive should be a composite executive representing Hindus and Muslims with an agreed policy acceptable to both and not liable to be turned out by the legislature, but independent of it as in the U.S.A., the Prime Minister being elected by the legislature instead of by the people as in America. For portfolios regarding law and order and education, a Minister and an Assistant Minister should be appointed, one of whom should be a Muslim.

D. Public Service Commissions—One at least of the members of the Commission in provinces where Muslims are in a minority should be a Muslim.

E. Judiciary:—The personal law of the Muslims should be administered by Muslim judges.

F. Muslim Board of Education and Economic Uplift:—It should be provided to control and supervise the cultural side of education of Muslims and their technical and industrial training, and to devise measures of economic and social uplift.

G. Special Taxation:—If for any special object Muslims are willing to tax themselves, the necessary legislation should be passed.

During the transitional period migration should be on a voluntary basis. For this legislation should be passed for each region and a Royal Commission should be appointed to lay down a suitable programme of gradual exchange of population.

The scheme suffers from two very serious defects. It requires very extensive exchange of populations—sometimes covering long distances—and not only as between one province and another of British India but also from the Indian provinces to Indian States and *vice versa*. The very tremendousness of the expenditure of money and effort involved in such exchange, apart from the suffering it will involve, makes it impracticable—even though the migration may be spread over a number of years. It is intended to be voluntary in the beginning, but at a later stage it will have to be compulsorily done. If it is voluntary, it is not likely to be resorted to by any considerable number of either Hindus or Muslims who are equally attached to their lands. If it is

compulsory, the suffering involved will be simply unbearable. It will affect, as has been pointed out by "Punjabi," nearly two-thirds of the total population of India.

Secondly, the scheme contemplates the perpetuation of the States more or less in their present condition, as also a federation under the British. It may be that the author has left the political question of relation between the ruler and the ruled open to be settled by the people as a whole, whether in British India or in the States. But when framing such a constitution it is not possible to concentrate on the communal aspect altogether. All political parties in India are agreed on independence, except perhaps the Liberals who insist on Dominion Status, which they regard as equivalent to independence. Similarly, it is impossible to allow the autocratic form of Government that subsists in the States, and it must be replaced by a democratic form in which the utmost that the Princes can expect for themselves will be a limited constitutional monarchy like England, the power being transferred to representative institutions.

From the point of view of Hindus, it is open to the objection that a pretty large tract is sought to be transferred to the Hyderabad State without any reason whatsoever, the only imaginable reason being to provide an opening to the sea to the Hyderabad State and to deprive the Hindu zone, of the city and port of Madras. Similarly, the predominantly Hindu tract near Calcutta and

Calcutta itself are to be included in the Muslim zone without any reason. The Province of Delhi and Lucknow has no justification for its creation, as in no case is the Muslim population of the area in a majority. Unless and until exchange of population is completed, this problem that now faces the two communities from day to day will continue to trouble them. And who knows, if the distrust and incompatability between Hindus and Muslims on which the scheme is based really present insoluble difficulties, that they will not grow during this interval and make any solution impossible?

Looked at from another point of view, the scheme amounts to no more than a redistribution of provincial boundaries, if exchange of populations is excluded. The proposals for safeguards of Muslim interests may be considered in detail. It is possible to arrive at an agreed settlement on these, as also on the question of giving the utmost possible autonomy to the provinces, consistent with the safety and unity of India as a whole.

CHAPTER V.

THE SIKANDAR SCHEME

,The fourth scheme is that of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, which is published in the form of a pamphlet—*Outlines of a Scheme of Indian Federation*. It is a scheme for the amendment of the Government of India Act which in its present form is unacceptable. It accepts the desirability and indeed the indispensability of a federation, while it aims at attaining complete control over the administration of the affairs of the country, and that within the shortest possible time; it does not necessarily connote severance of connection with Great Britain. It suggests amendments so as to remove the doubts and suspicions in the minds of the Muslims and the Princes, and seeks to provide for adjustments which will enable all to proceed with accelerated pace towards the objective, but keep the whole body intact without leaving stragglers behind. Instead of bringing British Indian Provinces and Indian States into the federation as two distinct components, it provides for their entering it on a regional basis, dividing the country into several regions of a homogeneous character, each region comprising the British Indian Provinces and the Indian States falling within it.

For the purpose of establishing an all-India federation on a regional basis, the country shall

be divided into seven zones as under:—

Zone 1:—Assam, Bengal (minus one or two western districts to reduce the size of the zône with a view to approximate it to other zones) Bengal States and Sikkim.

Zone 2:—Bihar, Orissa (plus the area transferred from Bengal to Orissa).

Zone 3:—United Provinces and U.P. States.

Zone 4:—Madras, Travancore, Madras States and Coorg.

Zone 5:—Bombay, Hyderabad, Western India States, Bombay States, Mysore and C.P. States.

Zone 6:—Rajputana States (minus Bikaner and Jaisalmer), Gwalior, Central India States, Bihar and Orissa States, C.P. and Berar.

Zone 7:—Punjab, Sind, N. W. F. Province, Kashmir and Jaisalmer.

The proposed composition of these zones is only tentative and may be altered if necessary. There will be a Regional Legislature for each zone, consisting of representatives of both British Indian and Indian States units, and the representatives shall collectively constitute the Central Federal Legislative Assemby of 375 members—250 from British India and 125 from the Indian States; one-third of the total number being Muslims and other minorities being given their share as in the Government of India Act, 1935. The Regional Legislature shall deal only with subjects included in the Regional List, but

may, at the request of two or more units of the region, legislate with regard to subjects falling within the Provincial List to secure uniformity and facility of administration within the zone, and no legislation will be passed in the Regional Legislature without a two-thirds majority to give additional security to smaller units. Regional Legislatures may authorize the Federal Legislature to pass legislation with regard to subjects included in the Regional and Provincial Lists, but such authorization will not be effective unless four out of seven zones ask for it, and legislation so passed shall take effect only in the zones which ask for it, unless it is endorsed by all the seven Regional Legislatures, and shall be repealed if two zones ask for its repeal.

The Federal Executive shall consist of the Viceroy and a Council of Ministers—not less than seven and not more than eleven, including the Federal Prime Minister. The Prime Minister shall be appointed by the Viceroy from among the members of the Federal Legislature and the other Ministers also from among the members in consultation with the Prime Minister, provided (a) that each zone shall have at least one representative in the Cabinet, (b) that at least one-third of the ministers so appointed shall be Muslims and (c) that at least two of the Ministers, if their number does not exceed nine, and at least three, if their number exceeds nine, shall be chosen from amongst the representatives of States—(b) and

(c) may overlap,—and (d) that every attempt will be made to provide adequate representation to other important minorities also. During the first fifteen or twenty years from the date of inauguration of the Federal scheme, the Viceroy may nominate two of his Ministers from outside the Legislature and entrust to them the portfolios of Defence and External Affairs and thereafter from among the members of the Legislature. The normal term of office of the Ministers will be the same as that of the Legislature, *i.e.*, five years; a Minister representing a particular zone shall be removed if he loses the confidence of the majority of the representatives of his Regional Legislature. The Ministry as a whole, except the Ministers of Defence and External Affairs appointed from among outsiders within the first fifteen or twenty years, shall resign if a vote of no-confidence is carried in the Federal Legislature.

The representatives in the Regional Legislature shall be chosen in case of British Indian units by the Provincial Legislature; and in the case of Indian States, during the first ten years three-fourths will be nominated by the Ruler and one-fourth will be selected by the Ruler out of a panel to be elected by the State Assembly, during the next five years two-thirds will be nominated and one-third selected from a panel as above, and after 15 years one-half will be nominated and one-half

selected, and after 20 years and thereafter one-third will be nominated and the remaining two-thirds selected out of the panel.

There shall be a Committee of Defence to advise on matters relating to defence, as also another committee to advise on matters connected with External Affairs.

The Federal Railway Authority, shall be so constituted as to have at least one representative from each of the seven zones.

Effective safeguards will be provided (a) for protection of legitimate rights of minorities, (b) to prevent racial discrimination against the British, (c) against violation of treaty and other contractual rights of Indian States, (d) to preserve the integrity and autonomy of both British India and Indian States units against interference by Federal Executive or Federal or Regional Legislature, (e) to ensure safety of India against foreign aggression, and peace and tranquility of the units as also of the country as a whole, (f) to prevent subversive activities by the citizens of one unit or zone and (g) to protect the culture and religious rights of the minorities.

The composition of the Indian Army as on January 1, 1937, shall not be altered. In case of reduction, the communal proportion shall be maintained, but this may be relaxed in case of war or other emergency.

Only those subjects the retention of which is essential in the interests of the country as a

whole and for its proper administration shall be allocated to the Centre, *e.g.*, Defence, External Affairs, Communication, Customs, Coinage, Currency, etc. The remaining subjects shall be transferred to the units or zones. Residuary powers in regard to subjects not specifically included in the Federal List shall vest in the units. In case of doubt whether a subject is Federal, Concurrent, Regional or Provincial, the decision of the Viceroy in his discretion shall be final. The Federal Legislature shall be unicameral, provided that additional seats distributed equally among the seven zones may be given in the Federal Assembly to enable special interests who are given representation in the Upper House at present to be represented in it.

Adequate and effective machinery shall be set up in the Provinces to look after and protect the interests of minorities.

The scheme is avowedly only a scheme of amendment of the Government of India Act, 1935, and does not aim at independence of India. It introduces an additional legislature in the form of a Regional Legislature. It does not contemplate purely democratic election in the Indian States at any time even in the future, and seeks to join in the Federal Assembly as also in the Regional Legislature two classes of men—those coming from British India being elected representatives of the people, those coming from the States being only nominies of the Princes, at

least a proportion varying from three-fourths to one-third being selected out of a panel in case of the larger State units. It provides for outsiders to be appointed in the Federal Cabinet in charge of the important portfolios of Defence and External Affairs. It destroys joint responsibility of the Cabinet by making the Ministers responsible to the Regional Legislatures requiring their resignation severally in case they lose the confidence of their Regional Legislature, and by maintaining the outsiders in office in spite of vote of no-confidence of the Federal Legislature. It limits the choice of Ministers unduly by attaching to them communal, regional and States qualifications, which it will be difficult to reconcile with ability and efficiency, and which will also involve divided allegiance. Its merit as compared with the other schemes is that it does not aim at a division of the country on communal lines either for political or cultural purposes and regards India as one single country.

CONCLUSION

The four schemes which have come to my notice have been described and discussed above in short. They all are based on the assumption that there is no single nation in India, that the differences between Hindus and Muslims are so great and the gulf between them is so unbridgeable that some drastic step has to be taken if peace has to be maintained between them. The remedy that is suggested is the creation of cultural zones which in some of them are treated as separate and independent countries joined to one another by a thin tie of confederacy. None of them contemplates independence of India, at any rate in the near future. Some of them frankly suggest only amendments to the Government of India Act, to make it acceptable by a redistribution of provinces and areas on communal lines; while others, though not intended expressly as amendments to, or alternatives of, the Government of India Act, do not think of an India functioning solely on her own and outside the British Empire, at any rate in the near future. My object in collecting together these schemes is to invite a study of them so that the trend of some intellectual Muslims' minds may be known and the communal problem considered in all its aspects. It is not claimed that the criticism of the schemes is comprehensive or complete. The labour of the writer will be more than rewarded if this creates interest in them and leads to further study.

APPENDIX 1

(Resolution adopted by the All India Muslim League held at Lahore on 23rd March, 1940 on "Pakistan")

"While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, as indicated in their resolutions dated the 27th of August, 17th and 18th of September and 22nd of October, 1939, and 3rd of February, 1940, on the Constitution issue, this session of the All-India Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of Federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to and unworkable in the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

It further records its emphatic view that while the declaration dated the 18th of October, 1939, made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is reassuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Government of India Act 1935, is based will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests and communities in India, Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered "de novo" and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this

country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute "Independent States", in which the Constituent Units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

This Session further authorises the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary."

APPENDIX 2.

(Resolution adopted by the All India Azad Muslim Conference held at Delhi on 30th April, 1940 against the Pakistan Scheme.)

"This Conference of representatives of the Indian Muslims, who desire to secure the fullest freedom for their country, consisting of delegates and representatives from all provinces, after having given its fullest and most careful consideration to all the vital questions affecting the interests of the Muslim community, and the country as a whole, declares the following:—

India, with its geographical and political boundaries is an indivisible whole, and as such, it is the common homeland of all the citizens, irrespective of race or religion, who are joint owners of its resources.

All nooks and corners of the country contain the hearths and homes of the Muslims, and the cherished historic monuments of their religion and culture, which are dearer to them than their lives.

From the national point of view every Muslim is an Indian. The common rights of all the inhabitants of the country and their responsibilities in every walk of life and in every sphere of activity are the same.

The Indian Muslim, by virtue of these rights and responsibilities, is unquestionably an Indian national, and in every part of the country, he is entitled to equal privileges with all

other Indian nationals in every sphere of governmental, economic and other national activities. For that very reason, Muslims owe equal responsibility with other Indians for striving and making sacrifices to achieve the country's Independence.

This is a self-evident proposition, the truth of which no right-thinking Muslim will question.

This Conference declares unequivocally and with all the emphasis at its command that the goal of Indian Muslims is complete independence along with the protection of their religious and communal rights, and they are anxious to attain this goal as early as possible.

Inspired by this aim, they have in the past made great sacrifices.

This Conference unreservedly and strongly repudiates the baseless charge levelled against Indian Muslims by the agents of British Imperialism and others that they are an obstacle in the path of Indian freedom and emphatically declares that the Muslims are fully alive to their responsibility and consider it inconsistent with their tradition and derogatory to their honour to lag behind others in the struggle for the country's independence."